

Grades 4-5

Materials

lined paper and pencil
paper for artwork
crayons, paint, pencils,
and other art materials
some kind of frame to
display artwork and
writings

Materials

TV/DVD player
computer with CD-ROM
drive

Vocabulary

beat
rhythm
social dance
sacred

ANIMALS IN NATIVE AMERICAN DANCE

Length

2 sessions

Concept/Objectives

Students will understand the importance of animals in Native American dance.

Activity

Students write a description of how they would represent an animal of their choice through dance, create an original work of art depicting what their regalia and/or mask would look like, and perform their dance.

Toolkit Resources

Cherokee Dances on the **Dances of the Americas** DVD:

About the Dances
Length: 00:06:03

Beaver Dance
Length: 00:05:05

Eagle Dance
Length: 00:02:27

Git-Hoan Dances on the **Dances of the Americas** DVD:

About the Dances
Length: 00:06:55

Raven Dance
Length: 00:03:20

Chief's Headdress Dance
Length: 00:02:53

World of Dance and Music CD-ROM



Instructional Strategies and Activities

Preparation

Have writing and artwork materials available.

Introduction

Tell students that animals play a very important part in Native American cultures, and this is reflected in their dances. Tell them that they are going to watch two very different Native American groups located thousands of miles from one another—the Cherokee and the Tsimshian (the Git-Hoan Dancers are descendants of the Tsimshian). Ask them to notice that, even though these cultures are very different, animals play a key role in their dances. They should look for differences and similarities. The Cherokee are a southeastern nation and once lived in the area that is now Kentucky, Tennessee, North Carolina, and northern Georgia. The majority of the Cherokee now reside in North Carolina and Oklahoma. The Tsimshian lived in the Pacific Northwest of North America. Also ask students to notice how the dancers move to the beat and rhythm.

Play the Eagle Dance and Beaver Dance segments from Cherokee Dances. Ask: What animal was represented in the first dance? (Eagle/bird) How do you know? (Feathers, flapping arms, flying movements)

Ask: What animal is depicted in the second song? (Beaver) How is the animal used in a different way in this dance? (Dancers are depicting hunters hunting the beaver instead of acting like the animal itself.) Is this dance ceremonial or is it a social dance? (Social)

Play About the Dances from Cherokee Dances and have students discuss what they learned about the dances and their purposes from Bullet Standingdeer, the commentator. Discuss social dances (for fun/recreation and being with others) and ceremonial dances (sacred dances or dances that are religiously important).

Play the Chief's Headdress Dance and the Raven Dance segments from the Git-Hoan Dances.

Ask: How are animals represented in The Chief's Dance? (In the headdress, which has an eagle on it. Also, eagle down is put in the headdress and sprinkled while dancing. Sea lion whiskers are also in the headdress.) What animal is depicted in the other dance? (Raven/bird) How do the dancers make themselves look like a bird? (masks, bird-like movements)

If time allows, show and discuss About the Dances from Git-Hoan Dances to give students more insight into the dances.

Ask: How are the Git-Hoan dances similar/different from the Cherokee dances? (Many answers apply here.)

Activity 1

Tell students to imagine they are any animal they choose. Tell them to write a description of a dance they are going to create to represent this animal. Why did they select the movements they did? How will they dress? Why? How will they use their space? Tell them Native Americans do not wear costumes. Tell them to not create their look through a costume (you may need to discuss the difference between costume and regalia).

This activity may not be completed in the first session and may need to be completed in the second session.

Activity 2

After dance descriptions are completed, tell students they are going to create a two-dimensional artwork (a painting or drawing) of what they would look like when they performed their "animal dance." This artwork should depict how they are going to "look" like the animal they have chosen.

After completion, students could create a classroom display of their descriptions and artwork. Both could be framed with construction paper.

Extensions

A choreography/performance activity is described in the Performance Assessment.

This lesson could be an introduction to a project where students create their own craft to represent an animal. Native Americans do not typically dress up like animals. Their regalia may include an accessory that represents the animal, but you can always tell they are people. The Cherokee dance with eagle fans to represent wings is a great example of this. For this activity, students would create something—such as "wings" or "horns"—that represents their animal of choice.

Kentucky Academic Content

Big Idea: Humanity in the Arts

Academic Expectations 2.26

Program of Studies
Understandings
AH-4/5-HA-U-1
AH-4/5-HA-U-2
AH-4/5-HA-U-3

Skills and Concepts
AH-4/5-PA-S-Da1

Core Content
AH-(04)(05)-2.2.1

Big Idea: Purposes for Creating the Arts

Academic Expectations 2.26

Program of Studies
Understandings
AH-4/5-PCA-U-1
AH-4/5-PCA-U-3

Skills and Concepts
AH-4/5-PCA-S-Da1

Core Content
AH-(04)(05)-3.2.1

Big Idea: Processes in the Arts

Academic Expectations 1.15 2.26

Program of Studies
Understandings
AH-4/5-PA-U-1

Skills and Concepts
AH-4/5-PA-S-Da2

Core Content
AH-(04)(05)-4.2.3

Cross-Curricular Connections

Social Studies

Darla Jackson, Artist in Residence

Darla Jackson is available to conduct residencies through the Kentucky Arts Council's Arts Education program. She is a clogger with the Sugar and Spice Cloggers of Harlan/Corbin and has experience in square dancing, folk dancing, Canadian clogging, and buck dancing as well. She is proud of both her Cherokee and Appalachian heritage and loves to show the similarities of Native American dance and clogging. Learn more about Jackson from the Arts Council's Arts Education Roster: artistdirectory.ky.gov/aer/educationalarts/darla-jackson.htm. For information about how to apply for an artist's residency, visit artistdirectory.ky.gov/aer/programs.htm.

This lesson could be used with two other lesson plans—Masks in Native American Dancing and Southwestern Spirit Dancing—to create a unit on Native American dance. As a cumulative event, students could create a large art display and give presentations about what they learned for their parents and the student body.

Costumes Versus Regalia

Many people outside the Native American community do not realize that there is a huge difference between costumes and regalia. I stress this when I visit schools, and a brief discussion of this would be great.

A **costume** is used when someone is trying to act or dress up like something. Costumes are worn as disguises, and we typically think of Halloween when we think of costumes. At Halloween when someone goes out and buys an Indian costume, they are dressing up and acting like a Native American. It doesn't make them Native just because they are in a costume. Costumes are for fun and disguise.

Regalia is the traditional dress of a Native American's nation. Great care is put into the making and putting together of ceremonial regalia. It is considered sacred. Most items of clothing have been blessed and in the pockets, bags, and so on, there are hidden things, such as eagle feathers, Bibles, sacred herbs, tobacco, and other possessions that hold great importance to the dancer. Every part of the regalia has special meaning, whether it was a gift, an ancestor's, or of some other importance. One great example is the jingle dress, which is a dress with hundreds of rolled tin cones on it. Every tin cone is rolled and applied to the dress and must be prayed upon before it is added. Regalia is actually considered a vital part of the ceremony or dance.

A lot of Native Americans take offense when someone calls their regalia a costume, and it is inappropriate to do so. Most, like me, realize that people do not mean to be rude, they just don't know. Most times they are actually trying to pay a compliment like, "Your costume is beautiful." I usually reply, "Thank you, I'm glad you like my regalia." When I visit schools we usually give a performance on the last day. Many students ask if they can wear their Indian costumes from Halloween when they perform. I say "no," and then we have a discussion about it.

Support/Connections/Resources

The **World of Music and Dance** CD-ROM and the Dance and Culture section of the binder contain more information about the Cherokee and Git-Hoan dances and cultures as well as handouts.

The Git-Hoan Dances section of the **Dances of the Americas** DVD includes two additional dances in which animals are depicted: the Shaman and Land Otters Dance (length: 4:21) and the Eagle Dance (length: 2:55).

Applications Across the Curriculum

Social Studies

Native American culture: You could expand this to a discussion of culture in general and the role that dance and other arts play in defining cultures and allowing us to understand others' different ways of thinking and expressing themselves.

Open Response Assessment

Prompt:

Imagine that you are creating a dance that depicts an animal.

Directions:

- A. Describe four dance movements you could create that would convey to your audience that you are this animal. Explain how these movements are appropriate to the animal.
- B. Describe what you might wear to represent this animal. Use specific details in your description.

OPEN RESPONSE SCORING GUIDE

4	3	2	1	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student shows an extensive understanding of how regalia and movement can be used in a dance to depict animals.• Student provides four examples of movements and an in-depth explanation of how these movements are appropriate.• Student provides many specific details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student shows a good understanding of how regalia and movement can be used in a dance to depict animals.• Student provides four examples of movements and an explanation of how these movements are appropriate.• Student provides several details.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student shows a basic understanding of how regalia and movement can be used in a dance to depict animals.• Student provides at least two examples of movements with a basic explanation of how these movements are appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student shows minimal understanding of how regalia and movement can be used in a dance to depict animals.• Student provides at least one example of movement with minimal explanation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No answer or irrelevant response

Adaptations for Diverse Learners

This lesson can be adapted for most students with special needs. More time could be used for viewing the DVDs, and some students may have to sit closer to the television.

Some special needs students may verbally describe their dance instead of write it.



Performance Assessment

Performance Event:

Students perform the dance they wrote about in the Open Response Assessment.

Directions:

Ask students to transform the dances they described in the Open Response Assessment into a short performance piece. Each dance should include the four movements as well as any additional choreography the student feels is necessary. Have each student perform his/her dance in the classroom and have students in the audience guess what animal is being depicted in each dance.

PERFORMANCE SCORING GUIDE

4	3	2	1	0
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student creates a dance that includes at least four movements and depicts a recognizable animal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student creates a dance that includes four movements and depicts a generally recognizable animal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student creates a dance that includes at least three movements, but only minimally depicts a recognizable animal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students attempts dance, but does not create a recognizable animal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-participation

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Some dances are for recreation and being with others. This type of dance is called a
 - A. ceremonial dance.
 - B. ritual dance.
 - C. social dance.
 - D. artistic dance.
2. Some dances are sacred and religious in nature. This type of dance is called a
 - A. ceremonial dance.
 - B. ballroom dance.
 - C. social dance.
 - D. artistic dance.
3. The dress and accessories a Native American might wear during a dance are called
 - A. costume.
 - B. regalia.
 - C. disguise.
 - D. garments.
4. In a Native American dance where the dancers are depicting eagles, you would most likely expect them to
 - A. wear an eagle costume.
 - B. perform slow, heavy movements.
 - C. carry or wear an eagle feature.
 - D. not to have accompanying music.

Multiple Choice Answer Key

1. C
2. A
3. B
4. C

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Reviewed by the
Kentucky
Department of
Education

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of the Dance Arts
Toolkit. To order the
entire toolkit or for
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about the Arts Toolkit
project, visit
www.ket.org/artstoolkit
or call (859) 258-7294.**